MIST 101

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Following the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, the sharing of threat information between government agencies and the private shipping industry became a top priority. As initiatives progress, private industry is being asked to share more of what they know and yet reciprocal security information and incentives are perceived as minimal at best.

The Maritime Information Sharing Taskforce (MIST) is an interagency effort to improve maritime and intermodal information sharing between industry and government stakeholders by capturing best practices in information sharing, creating a structure for collaborative problem solving, and communicating unique local issues to national policy makers. MIST specifically looks to address some of the most challenging strategic, financial, operational, policy, social, and ideological barriers that can hinder efforts to sharing security information freely and pursuing common information sharing goals.

Using problem solving workshops, polling, social networking, and field observations, the MIST process identifies local issues, activities, resources, and incentives for information sharing. Working directly with local stakeholders, MIST explores the desirability, usefulness, and usability of new policies and technologies. Our findings highlight best practices as well as indicate gaps in information sharing and collaboration, poor alignment of information systems with user needs, and the need for appropriate financial, operational, strategic, and social incentives for information sharing. The findings are recorded in a report that could be used to education stakeholders, influence policy and serve as investment justification for Port Security grants.

The MIST process has been conducted in the Ports of Los Angeles/Long Beach, Puget Sound and Honolulu. Our MIST team just completed the workshop in Sector Delaware Bay this past September. This was a really exciting application as there was fantastic participation from the regional fusion center and we were able to include the perspectives of the rail industry. The participants have already created a list of action items and will address them in the upcoming local Area Maritime Security Committee (AMSC) October 15th!.

The MIST team is led by the Maritime Defense and Security Research Program (MDSRP) at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in coordination with several Federal agencies: the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (MARAD); Global Maritime and Air Intelligence Integration (GMAII); the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG); the National Maritime Domain Awareness Coordination Office (NMCO); Customs and Border Protection (CBP); the Department of Defense Interagency Solution Analysis (IASA); and the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment (ISE).

For more information on the MIST process and reports from previous MIST efforts, please go to
http://www.gmsa.gov/gmiss/mist.php [1]

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